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INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY PERSONNEL STUDY
STAFFING: DIA

1. Current and Project Skill Requirements and Quality of Staff

a. Critical Occupations

DIA has identified its most critical skills as intelligence officers, secretary/clerical, engineering/scientific and technical, and computer specialists. DIA does not employ mathematicians and linguists in any significant numbers. Intelligence Officers represent 24 percent of the DIA civilian workforce, secretaries/clerical 12 percent, engineering/S&T 2 percent and computer specialists 3 percent.

b. Hiring and Retention

Data on on-board strength, hires and losses for the identified critical skills during the period 1983-1987 is as follows:

| | <u>Int/Off</u> | <u>Sec/Cler</u> | <u>Eng/S&T</u> | <u>CompSpec</u> |
|--|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Avg on-board strength | 1240 | 593 | 115 | 150 |
| Avg # hires/year | 46 | 153 | 18 | 25 |
| Avg rate of attrition: | .056 | .136 | .085 | .099 |
| Percent of losses w/5 yrs or less svc | .40 | .78 | .53 | .67 |

DIA's annual attrition rate between 1983 and 1987 has averaged 8.7 percent, which is below the government and the private sector averages. Attrition of secretaries/clericals and guards runs somewhat higher, but this rate is not above what is expected in the Washington, D.C. area. DIA believes that the primary reason for such high early turnover is higher pay and better benefits in the private sector, and the secondary one is transfer of military spouses, particularly for clerical/administrative personnel.

c. Recruitment

DIA conducts a central recruitment effort and has direct hiring and salary setting authority granted under the Authorization Act of 1984. These authorities are comparable to those of CIA and NSA.

DIA reports little difficulty in recruiting for intelligence officers. Extensive recruitment efforts at colleges and universities, contacts with professional organizations and military associations, and an active advertising program produce many job applications. There are difficulties in recruiting for subspecialties such as

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collection management, due primarily to the decreasing pool of individuals with prior military experience.

Recruitment and retention of secretarial/clerical personnel are a continuing problem for DIA. Despite extensive recruitment efforts, competition in the Washington metropolitan area is great and the DIA salary structure is not on a par with the private sector (even though DIA has adopted a special salary rate for these skills.) Turnover is high, especially among the better quality secretarial/clerical personnel, most of whom leave for higher salaries or to accompany a military spouse.

DIA does not recruit in engineering/scientific and technical or computer science personnel at the entry or pre-professional level. Because of the narrow and highly specialized nature of such positions within DIA, recruitment efforts are concentrated on full-performance senior level candidates. Competition for such skills is intense, making these DIA's hardest slots to fill. Often the relatively few positions in these areas remain unfilled for periods of one to two years.

Extensive pre-employment processing time also adversely affects DIA recruitment. Many good candidates simply will not wait the extended period for a firm job offer, while others decline when finally cleared because they have found another job in the interim. For this reason, more candidates than would otherwise be necessary must be developed and processed for possible employment.

DIA states that a gross estimate of the cost per hire is about \$5,000, exclusive of any training costs.

d. Quality Indicators

DIA employs rather extensive qualification screening processes for its hires. Aptitude and abilities tests and a thorough interview process, including interviews with operational managers, attempt to insure that the high quality of hires is maintained. During the period 1983-1987, DIA received in excess of 2,000 applications for employment each year and, after screening, testing and interviewing, hired approximately 480 annually.

e. Competition with the Private Sector

DIA's major competition with the private sector is for experienced engineers/scientific and technical and computer science personnel and for secretary/clerical personnel. Higher salaries and better benefit packages are the major obstacles faced, although DIA staff said some well qualified candidates

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are unwilling to wait a lengthy period of time for the clearance process to be completed.

f. Future Staffing Projections

DIA forecasts that the next decade will bring many new challenges that will require new or changed skills. Intelligence analysts will have to be computer literate to conduct computer modeling or other advanced applications. In addition, DIA must be able to recruit individuals who can understand the technology that drives U.S. national collection systems and apply that knowledge to essential intelligence production. Intense competition for needed skills among DIA, other federal agencies and the private sector is anticipated.

2. Impact of Change in Authorization Levels on Ability to Recruit and Staff

DIA experienced large growth from its inception in 1961 through 1968 as a gradual transfer of functions to the new agency took place and the war in Southeast Asia intensified. 1969 saw the beginning of a 10 year decline in authorized positions, resulting in a 35 percent decrease from the 1968 authorized level. A restructuring of the Defense Attache System and the wind down of the war in Southeast Asia were the major reasons. During this period, attrition could not keep pace with mandated reductions, and a reduction-in-force was necessary in 1972. The DIA workforce declined to a state of one-deep in many vital areas and staff who were there at the time say there was considerable stress due to workload pressures. Entry level hiring of professionals virtually ceased. These drawdowns were accompanied by great technological advances, a demand for multidisciplined analysts, and greatly expanded target responsibilities. DIA retained much of its Soviet/Pact and Middle East capability at the expense of the rest of the world. By 1979, virtually no capability existed to analyze Third World military and political developments.

This problem became very evident by 1980 and a rebuilding of DIA's capability began. A gradual but significant build-up in the early 1980s started with the addition of Third World analysts. Support billets were added later along with such newly assigned functions as HUMINT management, Technology Transfer Analysis, DoD Intelligence Planning and DoD career intelligence training. By 1987, DIA had experienced a 31 percent growth from its 1981 strength authorization.

DIA believes its employees of today are much different from their counterparts of the 1960s, being better educated, more experienced and more capable of dealing with the present dynamic world environment. Although skill mix requirements have changed little since DIA's 1961 inception, the complexities of the analytical/collection problem and the tools used have changed

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greatly. The analyst of today must have a broad understanding of the world, its interdependence and relationships to the goals and objectives of the U.S., and must be capable of providing finished intelligence in near or real-time.

3. NAPA Staff Views

DIA operates an effective staffing program and is able to satisfy the personnel requirements of the Agency. Efficient recruiting mechanisms are in place and adequate special authorities for appointment and salary setting have been provided to ensure that DIA has the necessary tools to meet its staffing needs without the restrictions of the competitive service. DIA has demonstrated an ability to hire sufficient numbers of quality people to meet operational needs, although intense competition for some hard-to-hire critical skills remains a problem. High turnover among clerical and others support employees is also a problem, but this is a problem common to all employers in the Washington, DC area.

The authority Congress granted to DIA in 1984 has provided the management flexibility DIA needed to become more competitive and DIA has used that authority effectively.

Specific Courses of Action

None recommended.

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